PREFACE

THE term Bella Coola can be applied to the Indians who formerly occupied more than twenty villages on the lower Bella Coola River in central British Columbia, to their neighbours on the Kimsquit River, and to those living at the head of South Dean Inlet. Disease and changed conditions consequent upon the coming of the white man have so reduced their numbers that the last two groups of settlements have been virtually abandoned, while only one village remains in the Bella Coola valley. This is located on a reserve near the mouth of the river, and its four hundred inhabitants comprise practically all the survivors of what was once a tribe of several thousand people, with a distinctive language and culture of their own.

The material contained in this monograph was collected in this one village many years ago for the National Museum of Canada.[1] I was in the field during two periods that extended from March to August, 1920, and from September, 1923, to February, 1924. My field notes were worked up and the completed manuscript submitted to the Museum in 1926. Since that time it has suffered various vicissitudes. Recommended for publication by the Chief of the Anthropological Division, it passed through the hands of various editors; questions were raised about its size and the suitability of detailed studies of social anthropology in a government publication; and by the time these matters were adjusted, funds for extensive publications were unavailable and the manuscript was put aside. Since the aim of the investigation was to record, as far as possible, the sum-total of the complex and interwoven social life of the Bella Coola, I did not think it desirable to prepare short articles[2] summarizing different aspects, preferring to await an

[1] Then the Victoria Memorial Museum.

[2] The only exception was a short article on Bella Coola supernatural animals published in the Ontario Annual Archaeological Report for 1924-25, pp. 17-27.

[illegible]

128 [124] opportunity for the publication of the manuscript as a whole. I am deeply grateful to the Canadian Social Science Research Council for making this possible, and to their anonymous readers, many of whose suggestions I have utilized in the final draft, and to the University of Toronto Press for their subsidization.

Though the lapse of time between the field investigation and the appearance in print of the results is unfortunate, it is a matter of less importance than would be the case in other branches of science. To the student of social institutions, the significant fact is that a certain group of *homo sapiens* has practised certain customs, whether in 1911 or 1948 is immaterial. [121] Furthermore, the aim of the investigation was to collect information on Bella Coola life as it was *before* the breakdown of their own culture, and for this, data collected between 1911 and 1914 are more valuable than those acquired today. The manuscript was prepared from my extensive field notes, when the material was still fresh in my mind, and, with the exception of this preface and a few minor changes in editing,[1] is presented as it was written in 1914-16.

121 When studying the Bella Coola, I was definitely under the influence of the English school of anthropologists. To Haddon, Rivers, and Seligman, to name the outstanding English field anthropologists of their generation, the study of a native tribe meant an expedition to some far-off corner of the world, to a people about whom little was known. A return visit was improbable; aboriginal customs were passing away, hence it was the duty of the field investigator to learn and to record every scrap of information. I remember Dr. Haddon's insistence that it might be some trivial detail which would throw light on culture distribution, and hence, perhaps, aid in the reconstruction of tribal or racial movements, or in theoretical studies of the development or degeneration of institutions. Characteristic of this school, too, was an intense human interest in field

[1] Especially in changing the number of years which has elapsed since various incidents took place.

[illegible]

work. To overcome the difficulties of language, of suspicion, and of native reticence was a task in itself. And only when this was accomplished and the investigator recognized as a friend, could the information be obtained upon which the investigator was to describe "his people." As a broad generalization, the attitude of American anthropologists to field work in America is very different. Indians live near at hand; well-educated interpreters and informants are usually available; there is no thought of gleaning information from suspicious natives at the ends of the earth; and, perhaps most important of all, so much of Indian life has disappeared that the American anthropologist must learn by interview and question, rather than by observation and participation. The American school has tended to return repeatedly, often for short periods, to a small group or even to a single informant, and to publish intensive studies of aspects of culture with which the investigator is concerned.

Both approaches have their advantages. Anthropologically, using that term in its broadest sense, American Indians are better known than the natives of other continents; the professional anthropologist knows where to find detailed studies in technical journals and government publications, and to combine them if he wishes to know the life of a people as a whole. But to the anthropologist who is not a specialist in America, as well as to scholars in other social sciences, this lack of synthesis is a definite deterrent, and it may well be asked whether the anthropologist has played his part in making known the results of his research to workers in cognate fields. It was this which led R. H. Lowie to publish his *Crow Indians*,[1] and though the author reiterates that the volume contains little that he had not made known in earlier writings[2] in anthropological journals, it is safe to say that the *Crow Indians* will be read, quoted, and used when other reports on which it is based have been forgotten.

[1] New York: 1935.
[2] *Id.*, p. xi.

121 128 If I were to investigate and report on the Bella Coola at the present time, I would unconsciously be influenced by many years of contact with American anthropologists and their work. I would assume a general knowledge of North-West coast institutions, less interest in the details of ceremonial rites, and it would be impossible not to avoid comparisons with, and observations upon, the theoretical implications of many of the facts recorded. But though every field investigator is entirely objective as to the facts he collects, yet his interests, and his method of presenting them, are coloured by his background; in my case, by the older school of English anthropology. On the whole, I think this is fortunate. It means that the Bella Coola are portrayed as I saw them when I came fresh to a new field, practically uninfluenced by problems of North-West coast culture, and fully prepared to throw myself into their life. They were "my people," not a group in which I was interested because they had, or had not, certain culture traits with which I was concerned. In the course of my teaching experience, furthermore, I have wished repeatedly to give serious students detailed field monographs in which are recorded the interwoven social, religious, and folk-lore concepts of a people, the sum-total of their mental life, collected by one man at one time. This I have tried to do for the Bella Coola.

123 Following the English tradition, I wish to record how this material was collected. Before leaving for British Columbia, [115] I was advised by the late H. I. Smith, who had worked in the area, to talk to Joshua Moody (see Plate 1), an elderly Bella Coola Indian with whom Smith had worked. On explaining to Joshua that I had come to record in permanent form the traditions and lore of *his* people, Joshua grinned broadly and promised his help. Unfortunately, he spoke only a few words of English. I tried interpreter after interpreter, Indian and white, with only fair success, and my difficulties increased with the [44] opening of the canning season and the consequent employment of the younger men and women. I was urged to learn the [122] Chinook jargon, which serves widely as a *lingua franca* on the [198]

numbering, and centering of songs, in 1913 it was found that Jim Pollard (see Plate 3) alone had a sufficiently accurate memory to act as announcer. As more and more men wished to perform, he found himself unable to keep the songs in order, and asked me to join the chain as prompter. I held this position for the rest of the winter, taking a full part in every ceremony. Although the old customs had broken down enormously, this actual participation enabled me to understand the whole dances in a manner impossible from mere description. Later on, phonographic records were made of many of the songs used, thus preserving specimens of the fast disappearing music.

My intimate association with the Bella Coola enabled me to collect the material here presented which, having been verified and controlled, I have every reason to believe is correct. Nevertheless, it has one serious defect owing to the lack of acuteness of my ear. I found it almost impossible to differentiate certain sounds; in fact, I sometimes recorded the same word with different spellings. Consequently, I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the native terms used in this monograph. Moreover, I was entirely unable to analyze proper names, which would have been of great value in understanding the attributes of supernatural beings.

When writing up field notes, the realization of my own inefficiency in the recording of sounds tempted me to rely upon the spelling of Boas whenever possible. After considerable hesitation, I rejected this course for the following reason. Ethnological work falls into two categories, descriptive and comparative. This monograph is of the former type, based on actual work in the field and the inclusion of any material from another source would destroy its originality. I believe that a descriptive work should consist exclusively of the author's own research, and I have adhered to this principle in spite of the advantages which would have followed the use of Boas' linguistic terms. For the same reason no attempt has been made to compare the customs and beliefs of the Bella Coola with those of other tribes, although this would undoubtedly have shed

light on obscure points. There is a mass for the comparative student and nothing but confusion would result from such an interpretation in this volume. For the benefit of the reader, references have been inserted referring to *The Mythology of the Bella Coola Indians*[1] by Boas, the most comprehensive description of the tribe. In the field I deliberately disregarded published accounts.

And what of these people, the subject of this book?

The intimate experiences of the second winter in Bella Coola only confirmed my feeling of sadness at the decay of the old arts and crafts. Music, painting, carving, weaving, story-telling, acting, all are passing away. Only a handful of the tribe survives, and of them the younger people ape the white man and have little interest in the lore and customs of their forbears. I know of few sadder experiences than talking with some Bella Coola previously and realizing the tragedy which he feels at the termination of his people's culture.

Though the individual may suffer, civilization must press onward and the life of the Indian will soon disappear. With it will pass forever manners, customs, beliefs, rites, and knowledge, data of value to students of man both now and in the future. Every year lessens the amount of information available. In Bella Coola, for example, the death of Captain Schooner left a gap which none could fill. Others must follow him, and within a short time there will be no ethnological work possible in that tribe. A tithe of the people may survive, but their culture, the growth of generations, will have been swept away.

Most of those to whom I am indebted for help in this study have passed away. Dr. A. C. Haddon and Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, both of Cambridge University, who were my mentors in anthropology, are dead; so too is Dr. E. Sapir, former Chief of the Anthropological Division in the National Museum, who gave me instruction in phonetics, and Mr. H. I. Smith, Dominion Archaeologist, to whom are owing most of the photographs re-

[1] Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. II, 1898.

produced here, can only place on record my deep obligation and gratitude to each of these four. Dr. D. Jenness, who succeeded Dr. Sapir, was most co-operative. In Bella Coola, I was received with uniform kindness by the white inhabitants, particularly Mrs. Clayton, Mr. and Mrs. Burt Robson, and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Christensen.

Finally, and most important of all, I wish to express my appreciation to the Bella Coola themselves. Without their generous, kindly and helpful co-operation, this book could never have been written. I came as an uninvited stranger; they received me as a friend and a guest; and I left with sincere regret. My chief friends were Joshua Moody, Captain Schooner, and Jo Pollard, but I was also greatly assisted by Mr. Willie Black, Mr. and Mrs. Tallio Charlie, and Mr. and Mrs. Lance Chasti. To a host of others I am indebted in only a slightly less extent. The aid and friendship of these men and women is one of my pleasantest memories, and one which I wish to record with gratitude and appreciation.

In the actual publication of this complicated manuscript, I have likewise been fortunate in receiving co-operation and help. The University of Toronto Press accepted it for publication during the war, facing—and overcoming—the inevitable shortage of materials and of skilled craftsmen. Great difficulty was experienced in obtaining the type for phonetic symbols; to avoid undue duplication all native words, whether proper or common names, have been printed in italics. It is a tribute to the Press that it has completed the work. I am especially indebted to several former members of the editorial staff: Mrs. Hewitt, who supervised the initial editing, and her assistants, Mrs. Hackett and Mrs. Buzek. Mr. Weir, foreman of the composing room of the Press, has surmounted endless difficulties with enthusiasm and ingenuity. I am also grateful to Miss Harman, Associate Editor, who took the responsibility for final production details. Mr. Burns, General Manager of the Press, and Professor Brown, Editor, have both been helpful and co-operative throughout.

U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service
Bella Coola Valley

stream, on which the salmon-weir stood, was carried away."

The following village may be included with the above:

(21) *Nuxoag*: on the shore of North Bentinck Arm, to the east of the creek that flows into it at Green Bay. This long-deserted village was built so close to the ocean that high tides reached almost to the houses. According to one informant, the name was derived from that of the first chief seen down from above to that spot; while another connected it, etymologically, with *Nuxe*, the name of the barren district some four and a half miles up the valley of the creek. In recent years this village site has been used only as a summer camp.

The name given to the Bella Coola valley is *Nuxalk*; that given to the inhabitants of the valley, excluding those of village no. 21, is *Nuxálkmc*.[114]

Two points must be considered with regard to the above list of towns: In the first place, can it be regarded as an accurate list, or do the towns belong to the realm of mythology? In the second place, are the customs and beliefs of the inhabitants of the different towns sufficiently similar to be described without reference to local differences?

The first question is difficult to answer. The Bella Coola undoubtedly consider the existence of these towns to be an historical fact, but so do they regard the peopling of the earth by men created in the land above. Nevertheless, the above list appears to be substantially correct. The Bella Coola, although now collected into a single village, still remember their ancient homes. One man, for example, stated as a matter of course that he was a man of *Snuhli*. Further inquiry elicited the information that he had been born at *Sunal*, where his father had moved at the time of the smallpox epidemic. It later appeared that my informant's father was born at *Tsmusil*, had married there, and that it was his father who had moved

[113] This explanation may be only legendary.

[114] Boas, p. 49, states that *Nuxalk* is only applied to the lower villages of the valley. All the writer's information was contrary to this view.

from *Deadish*. My informant's grandchildren regard themselves as *Deadish* born, and their names are embodied in myths of that village, although their forbears have not lived there for five generations. There is no reason to suppose this case exceptional. Other instances were obtained of movements of people from one village to another at earlier times, and there seems no cause to doubt the general accuracy of these. Names embodied in the origin myths of different towns are used as prerogatives and have been potent factors in keeping their memory alive. Uncertainties and inaccuracies there must be in the foregoing list, but on the whole it appears to be fairly reliable, since few contradictions were received from different informants.

Accounts obtained of the same ceremonies from the descendants of people of different villages were found in most cases to be identical. There were a few differences in custom between the people of *Stuie* and those of the other upper valley towns on the one hand, and the inhabitants of the lower valley on the other. These will be mentioned when necessary, but on the whole the inhabitants of the Bella Coola valley can be considered as a tribal entity.

Boas (p. 41) gives a list of Bella Coola towns which agrees fairly well with the above. Among his villages are included *Pe·stlo* (no. 4), *Nalqa·stlmaxa·* (no. 7), and *Nastlem* (no. 16).[16] All the older people agreed that these are the names of streams, though settlements located on them may have been known by the same designations. Names of the five villages recorded by Boas, nos. 6, 8, 9, 19, and 24, were not known by several old men questioned on the subject.

The villages of the Bella Coola valley did not form a political unit; each was independent. A common language was spoken throughout and the inhabitants of the different towns recognized that their origins and customs were similar. This was also recognized to be the case with regard to the people living on South Bentinck Arm, and at the head of Dean Channel.

[16] Using in each case the spelling of this monograph.

G.66 Boas/B-9 (1932-1934) 1968
NBS Bellacoola NBS

"The Coming of *Awi'tlemkain*."[1]

Fifth moon after the summer solstice: *wwiaił*, "The Time for Easter Dances,"[2] or *Sipulwmis di Sisi*, "The Gathering of the Supernatural Beings."

Sixth moon after the summer solstice: *Sisnił*, "Sits Down," that is, when the sun reaches the solstice.

First moon after the winter solstice: *Iwnalmgwum*, "What Sweeps Away Food," or *Sxłkił*, "Angry Moon."

Second moon after the winter solstice: *Mlnaxdlmut*, "Facing in Both Directions," that is, half the month belongs to winter and half to summer, or *Lemxłs di Nuxłkłdmg*, "The Potlatch of the *Nuxłkłdmg*" (I, p. 185).

Third moon after the winter solstice: *Sisqum*, "When Herrings Spawn." These fish are said to have arrived on the same day of this moon as the winter solstice in the December one.

Fourth moon after the winter solstice: *Sitłxlp*, "Time for Making Salmon Weirs."

Fifth moon after the winter solstice: *Sisnwuał*, "Time for Making Hand-Nets for Olachen."

Sixth moon after the winter solstice: *Sisdmł*, "Time for Eating Spring Salmon." It is in this month that the summer solstice occurs.

The chief difficulty experienced by the Bella Coola in computing time rests on the fact that each month is judged by the moon, whereas the main periods of the year depend upon the solstices. One old man, from whom much of this information was obtained, stated that trouble always came at the winter solstice when the month was divided into two sections. The above list is obviously incomplete and incoherent, but it was the best available.

Supernatural Beings

In any primitive community the social, religious, political, and economic aspects of life are so interwoven that they

[1] See vol. II, p. 8 for a description of this mythical being.
[2] See vol. II, chap. I, for a description of these dances.

cannot be considered as distinct subjects, not only does this present difficulties to the investigator in the field, but it also makes it no easy task to describe the facts as obtained. With many tribes it is possible to deal first with the social life, and later with religion, shamanism, and other associated topics. Such a form of presentation has many advantages and would, if possible, have been followed. Unfortunately, the social organization and rank of the Bella Coola largely depend upon their religious beliefs as expressed in their mythology, and an understanding of at least the main features of these is essential. In this chapter a summary of these has been made, leaving for later description personal relations with the supernatural world and other points which do not profoundly influence the beliefs and practices of the whole community.

Like other peoples, the Bella Coola differ considerably in the fervour of their religious beliefs. But even allowing for individual variation, religious experiences and beliefs are matters of frequent occurrence and profound importance to the great majority of the tribe. The supernatural world is close around them; a sudden thought is caused by the intervention of a supernatural being; the peculiar action of an animal is an occurrence fraught with grave meaning; an unexplained sound always receives a supernatural explanation. The old beliefs survive even among members of the community who are nominal Christians, and those who hold to their ancient religion live in an atmosphere of the supernatural. The white man, whose scientific training and logic lead him to find a natural explanation for an incident, is puzzled and somewhat amused at what he often calls the childish beliefs of the Indian. The Bella Coola, on the other hand, seeing the hand of the supernatural in every untoward event, considers the attitude of the white man in seeking a natural explanation to be almost irreverent. The mental attitude of the Bella Coola to the supernatural does not differ vitally from that of the white man under like conditions; but whereas to white men religious experiences are most unusual, they are common occurrences to

of the fire devourer, the Bella Coola. We can traverse the country and it may be that he lacks form. The law of conservation of matter, the Bella would must have gone somewhere, and across the western sea where burning lamps, such bliss consisting in original material substance. This region is (see, 468).

being with a desire for human flesh (He anthropomorphic

The above list by no means exhausts this world. Those beings mentioned either in Raven's or office to make clear described are the most important, and beings of this type. the religious attitude of the Bella Coola dances only, and a Others appear in connection with festivil vol. II, chap. x, consideration of them can be deferred manism and allied whereas some belong essentially to o subjects treated in vol. I, chap. vi.

with which the Bella

The attitude of mingled hope and fear pomorphic beings is Coola regard their supernatural enthconcerning zoomorphic typical of their thoughts and actions orld the dividing line creatures as well. In the supernatural clearly defined; fabubetween human and animal beings is supermen, and can be both monsters have the mentality of ay as are anthropoappeased, besought, or cajoled precis form, supernatural morphic beings. Like those of human beings with whom animals can bestow good or evil on hu own in this chapter they come in contact. The division for convenience; it must, therefore, be regarded as mere e minds of the Bella does not correspond to a distinction in Coola.

wn to the Bella Coola

One of the most dreaded animals kn a large grizzly bear, is the *sisaq*, a monster about the size in colour. It walks with long, silky, beautiful hair, blue-gr hat its long fore-legs almost upright on short hind legs, so provided with sharp touch the ground at intervals; these a

[illegible] E-5 (1955-1956)1948
NEB Bellacoola NEB

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Ancestral Family—The Village Community—The Family—Kinship Terms—Slaves

As in other communities, the social, religious, and economic aspects of Bella Coola life are interdependent, but there is an added complexity in the influence of mythological concepts. This not only complicates investigation in the field, but it also renders a logical description of their customs difficult. Some reference to practices recorded in detail in later chapters is unavoidable. 128 182

In many communities, ethnologists have been able to begin with the social organization of the people. Among the Bella Coola, this is impossible, since their religious beliefs colour every aspect of their life, and these must be understood by anyone who wishes to comprehend their culture as a whole. In this chapter, too, it is necessary to commence with a description of that aspect of mythology which serves as the cohesive bond to one of the social units, the ancestral family.

Ancestral Family

As recorded in the last chapter, it is believed that in the beginning of time *Ălquntăm* caused the first men and women to be created in his house above and sent them down to populate the earth. They came in groups of two, three, four, or more, brothers and sisters, or more rarely man and wife, to different parts of the Bella Coola valley. They brought with them tools, houses, clothing, even sustenance in the shape of fish and animals. More important, from the point of view of social organization, they brought with them names and ceremonial prerogatives. In fact, the Bella Coola believe that their culture was created by *Ălquntăm* in the distant past, and has not been the result of slow growth. It is true that there 773 [829]

McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEB Bellacoola NEB

423 614 [773] [224] [428] [431] [428] [427] [431] [671] 226 [423] [577] [626] [128]

named that ten is the largest number of traps possible at that weir. Those who have the right to that weir are the members of the ancestral family with the names of those first users. At this point the logic of the Bella Coola fails to uphold the mythological pattern. No salmon-weir has remained in existence since the beginning of time; when one broke, owners were sometimes infants, and those who repaired the break became regarded as the rightful possessors. The system of ownership prevailing at the time of abandoning the weirs, was that *individuals*, not groups, had rights to certain sections of the weir which were willable like other personal property. In most cases this right was transmitted with a name, marking the section of weir, which had to be duly validated by presents. In other cases, the intangible ownership was willed without any mark whatever.* Unless bequeathed in this way, disputes were frequent. Rights of this kind were never sold although an owner often leased his section for a night, or longer period, receiving goods in return, and not forfeiting his ownership thereby. This was particularly common when the renter was planning to give a potlatch. No case was heard of in which the right to a certain section of salmon-weir was given to a non-member of the ancestral family. Theoretically, this was possible, but practically it would be so inconvenient that it is most unlikely ever to have occurred, since the Bella Coola is never such a slave to legal privileges that he fails to be guided by common sense.

Although individual ownership is thus recognized with regard to sections of salmon-weirs and suitable places for olachen-nets, the owner is bound to share his haul. When he catches a large number of fish, anyone, whether related to him or not, can demand some. He cannot refuse, since to do so would brand him as selfish. The effective check on this system

*Great difficulty was experienced in learning about the distribution of rights to sections of salmon-weirs. The evidence is conflicting, and though every effort was made to verify and check the above, there may be further regulations which were not learnt.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

614 The recent decay of Bella Coola culture may have destroyed
[82] traces of more definite obligations with respect to the ancestral family, but all the evidence indicates that it has always been a fluid unit. Its very lack of functions makes it difficult to
● [128] discuss, and the above account was pieced together from scraps of information collected from many different people at various times; yet, intangible though it be, it is a very real unit to the Bella Coola and pervades their life. Each individual knows those to whom he is related. In many cases the exact kinship is lost, but it is remembered that a man from such-and-such a village married a woman from another village, and it is proved from the use by their descendants of names from the same origin myth. The concept of physical strength imparted by a closely akin ancestry is always present and gives a person the real "power" in the village founded by those first ancestors
614 of his. For the ancestral family is usually thought of in terms
621 of villages. A man belongs to the village where his first ancestor came to earth, though he is equally a member of other towns into which his ancestors may have married. A
[554] man without ancestry, without *sal'alam*, is a miserable creature; he has no home in this world, or, theoretically, in the world to come. The ancestral family is a unit essentially held together by the ties of sentiment and pride of ancestry.

614 In addition to the above social elements of the ancestral
827 family, it is felt that all its members have certain tendencies. If one of the first ancestors had a certain physical peculiarity, or met with a particular kind of fortune, either good or bad, his descendants are more likely to experience the same than any other people. These tendencies may skip many generations, and may be inherited either through the mother or the father. In fact, Bella Coola belief on this point closely agrees with modern knowledge of heredity; the term for such an inheritable tendency is *xaläxaläm* or *xäxämaqäyat*. Such characteristics are:

(1) Proficiency in using tools;
(2) Ability as a hunter;

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

1777 from the Bella Bella, a fact emphasized by all. It is not difficult to understand, therefore, why elaborate myths are lacking, even if such were possessed by the Bella Bella. The Bella Coola possessed certain similar rites to which the Bella Bella prerogatives were in the process of being grafted at the time of the coming of the white man. There has since been general decay of ceremonial life, with the result that the whole situation is in a state of flux presenting great difficulties to the investigator.

428 *Sisaok* names are willed and inherited in the manner already described for other prerogatives. The type of dance, and the time of use, will be described in the following section of this chapter.

The Potlatch

* 556 It is unfortunate that an adequate treatment of Rank among the Bella Coola requires a description of the potlatch since this ceremony, or rather group of ceremonies, includes a number of features which, logically, should have been postponed until a later stage of this monograph. An effort has been made to lessen references to non-ritualistic features by the description, just given, of the basic concepts of chieftainship and the *sisaok* society. Other ideas will require rather lengthy digressions, a method of presentation which seems preferable to the use of many foot-notes, its only alternative.

General Observations

104 In scientific and popular writings alike, the term "potlatch" has been applied both to the public giving of presents, and to the rites at which this occurs. But among the Bella Coola, such distribution of gifts is necessary at every ceremonial; accordingly, each is essentially a potlatch. There is one, however, which the inhabitants regard as the most important of all, the goal which every ambitious man aims to reach, the rite in which his ancestral myth can be displayed. In this

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CHAPTER V

FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE POTLATCH

Heralds—Totem-Poles—Coppers—Professional Prerogatives—Walk Dances—Miscellaneous Ceremonies

128 556 THE ritual of the potlatch is so complicated that, in order to present a coherent account of it, it has been necessary to omit entirely some features that occur at many potlatches, and to refer briefly to others. This chapter is devoted to an elaboration of these points, thus avoiding the use of lengthy foot-notes in the preceding chapter.

Heralds

203 556 The principal functions of heralds[1] have already been described. They go from house to house inviting the people to assemble for the different ceremonies connected with the potlatch, but that is only one of their many duties. They likewise bear invitations to all types of ceremonies, such as marriages, mourning rites, or *Dzoniet* dances; in fact, they act as town criers. A person holding any public rite requests one or more heralds to deliver the invitation which is repeated in every house of the village in order from bottom to top.[2]

574 628 378 There are variations, of course, according to the rites to be performed. At a potlatch, the first duty of a herald is to seat the guests in their proper places. This requires not only a good memory, but also considerable tact, since errors with foreign guests cause friction and embarrassment, and diminish the prestige of the whole ceremony. During the actual progress of the rites, a herald must constantly add dignity to the occa-

[1] Herald, *alt*ᵉ, plural, *wasiltᵉalt*, not to be confused with *x'alt*, the name of a society (I, p. 378).

[2] This order may once have had a ceremonial significance but it has been considered for a long time merely a matter of convenience. When giving presents also, a man follows the same order in his mind and names first the occupants of the bottom house, thus minimizing the danger of overlooking a guest.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE5 Bellacoola NE5

expenditure though he must forgo the prestige enjoyed by a man who has been able to elevate his professional dames in a lavish manner. Selection is a constant factor in the social life of a Bella Coola; the man who uses all his wealth to acquire a firm seat cannot be "strong" in *nusté* matters; the man who desires to specialize in *kusiut* affairs cannot afford to display an elaborate totem-pole. Amid these conflicting desires, it often happens that a man somewhat neglects his professional prerogatives, especially those of which the dignity has been slightly lessened through superior skill shown by individuals endowed with no more than native ability. Upstarts of this kind have always infringed upon professional dignity, and the coming of the white man has added a new factor which has almost destroyed vocational prerogatives.

A'alk Dances

The most important, as well as the most spectacular, dances that occur at potlatches are those given by members of the *nusté* society. In addition to these, a feature of many potlatches is the performance of *a'alk* dances.[1] As already mentioned, from 1870 onwards there have been many changes in *nusté* ritual; new elements have been acquired by the marriages of Bella Coola to members of the coastal tribes, with the result that details of procedure vary at every ceremony according to the prerogatives of the donor. Since 1910, the influence of white civilization has increased to such an extent that *nusté* ceremonials have virtually been abandoned. This took place at a time when the ritual was in transition, a state of affairs which rendered difficult the collection of coherent information. *A'alk* dances are associated with *nusté*, but the addition of new features to the latter was accompanied by a decay of the former. Both societies have now almost ceased to exist, but whereas the *nusté* organization was abandoned during a period of change and accretion, that

[1] Called *tsilqua* in Kimsquit.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE5
Bellacoola NE6

177 of the *a'alk* came to an end when it
535 importance. It was impossible to obas already waning in
575 information about the latter as was gin as much detailed
128 possible that some of the facts recorded, and it is even
nusté ceremonial really belong to *a'alk* in connection with

The right to perform an *a'alk* dance rites.

424 validated ancestral prerogative of whi depends upon a duly
535 an *a'alk* name. Some of the first pers the obvious mark is
575 designations and dances with them from brought down such
of time, a few were acquired on this earbove in the beginning
[773] natural beings. Those who have right as gifts from super-
house organization which may be ten of this kind form a
This is closely associated both with the d the *a'alk* society.
chiefs, owing to the occurrence of the *saok* society and with
in the same ancestral myths. One of three types of names
[554] family may use his goods to validamber of an ancestral
another to make himself a *nusté*, a th his ancestral name,
and an important chief, endowed with a to become an *a'alk*,
be able to do all three. lity and wealth, may

A'alk dances are less spectacular t
nusté or *kusiut* societies, nor are an those of either the
The prerogatives of a member are lines or whistles used.
right to perform a certain dance, and ed to his name, the
commonly describes some feature of his use of a song which
types of dances are considered to be ancestral myth. Four
of acquiring and using any one of the *a'alk*; the methods
unnecessary to describe the differen are similar, so it is
account of the performance of each. s before the actual

If there is a dormant *a'alk* prerog
554 family of the donor of a potlatch, he usu ive in the ancestral
575 this as one of the features of his ceremy chooses to validate
his wife and other relatives to ensure thy. He first consults
be forthcoming, and if this matter can sufficient goods will
ratify, he chooses some young relative e arranged satisfac-
dormant right. It would be most unu the recipient of the
lected to decline the honour. Or usual for the youth se-
man, other than the

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

CHAPTER VI

ORIGIN MYTHS

Introductory—Bella Coola Origin Myths—Origin Myths of Other Tribes—Early Traditions Having the Ceremonial Significance of Origin Myths—Sisaok Origin Myths

Introductory

EXAMPLES will be given here of the origin myths, which are believed to authorize so much of the ritual already described, and to which repeated reference has been made. In 1898 Professor Boas published such an admirable collection of traditions of this type (pp. 50 ff.) that the present writer paid little attention to the subject. The Bella Coola, however, are so intensely proud of the deeds of their first forefathers that several insisted on recounting them before they were willing to do other work; in consequence, a fair number of myths was collected through necessity. Since tales of this type were recounted almost entirely at potlatches, their significance has declined since the prohibition of this rite. Consequently, many legends are only remembered in part; the abbreviated and often pointless series of anecdotes here recorded can be no more than a small part of the rich field which must once have existed among the Bella Coola.[1]

As Professor Boas has clearly shown, origin myths relate how, in the beginning of time, the supreme god sent down to earth the first ancestors of the Bella Coola people, each usually

[1] In writing up this field material, it was my original intention to place all legends together in a separate section, or appendix, following a common anthropological practice. This, however, would have been contrary to Bella Coola thought since origin myths, for example, are regarded as entirely different from either mere stories, or from incidents connected with shamans,—to name two other groups of what are usually described as "legends." I recognize that the insertion of this chapter of origin myths interrupts the sequence of presenting Bella Coola culture, but I believe that it is the way which the Bella Coola themselves would regard as logical, and that it brings out the essential interactions of this type of myth upon their whole life.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

178 versions of the myth given (vol. I, pp. 313-19) is a case in point. The first was told as a *smaiusta* by a woman who claimed to 773 be a descendant of the people figuring in it; the second, as a story, *simsma*, by a man. In view of the reliability of both informants, it seems highly probable that this is a story, partly converted to a myth. In other examples there are incidents resembling the supernatural tales given in vol. I, chap. IX, and here too it appears probable that *simsma* have been assimilated into *smaiusta*. It is complimentary to the truthfulness [577] of the Bella Coola, and to the respect they show for intangible [424] property, that none of the myths recorded were *smaiusta* owned by others. Repeatedly an informant would say that he knew one, but would not tell it since it belonged to some other family.

● 128 After collecting a few myths, in each of which it was stated 773 that the first settlers at village X were A, B, and C, with their sisters, P and Q, it seemed as if it would have been possible, before the culture of the Bella Coola had fallen into its present decay, to make a census of those whom they believe to have been first settlers of this earth, and that such a list would have had few contradictions. This was soon found to be false. Two myths may give different people as the first occupants of a certain village, nor does such contradiction trouble the Bella Coola. Each man, convinced of the authenticity of his own [811] family account, is quite willing to believe that the one belonging to someone else is equally correct. This characteristic lack of logical consistency has already been mentioned in other connections. Boas (p. 61) likewise gives an instance of uncertainty as to the first occupants of a village, though, on the whole, he found Bella Coola mythology to be more codified than the present writer has done. In view of their lack of systematization in other matters, it would have been surprising if they had evolved a census of their first ancestors, accepted by all as accurate.

[178] Another matter to be considered at this point is the similarity of detail in many myths. In part this can be explained

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

by the assumption that *sumsma* have been elevated into *smaiusta;* in this case it would not be impossible for the same story to have been used by two or more families. A more common explanation is the splitting of myths. Although, theoretically, one can never be altered, and portions in the possession of other individuals are remembered as such, there must have been many cases in which the owner of a section told the whole as his own property. This would not be difficult in cases where he moved away from the other members of his family. In course of time, with the assimilation of elements in themselves not strictly mythological, two myths would evolve having a few incidents in common. If asked concerning this, the Bella Coola explain that the first people were quite as capable of doing the same things as two modern men. The occurrence of the same name, or names, in different myths does not, according to them, prove a connection, since many of the first people had the same names.

Finally, there have been included a number of myths dealing with the coming to earth of people in other localities. Probably these are, in origin, those of other tribes, more or less assimilated to the Bella Coola pattern. Each was said to have been obtained by the marriage of one of the descendants of the people described therein with a Bella Coola.

No further explanation is needed for the following myths which are arranged, as far as possible, according to the list already given of Bella Coola towns.

Bella Coola Origin Myths

origin myth of *Ălqălăxt*[1]

In the beginning of time, *Ălqunăxm*, in his form of *Sunx*, the Sun, sent down a man, *Yaxalt"mai*, to Mount *Nus-mătlaix* (also called *Ălqus-măkăkhs*, *Sqatsdx*, and *Alkhumăkhs*), a mountain on the north side of the Bella Coola River about two miles from the sea, near the upper end of the Indian reserve. With him came *Xwaxwaxwaxm*, the Hummingbird,

[1]Related by Mrs. Webber.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

with the others, including the one who had just been leader, as followers. It is said that there was rarely friction among the joint husbands, since each realized that his turn would come as head of the household, and meanwhile the wife endeavoured to share her favours indiscriminately. The children were considered equally the offspring of each husband, thus automatically acquiring membership in several ancestral families. Such were regarded as indeed fortunate, provided with every potential means of assistance in the struggle of life.

Recognizing its importance, every effort was made to verify this information. Further questioning elicited the statement that the informant had never seen a case of this, though he asserted that when a young man he had often heard of it and that the custom had then only recently died out. Another old man and an elderly woman confirmed the above statement almost word for word, and each added that it was well known when they were young, though they had never actually seen it in practice. One man believed that the custom had formerly prevailed in several parts of the coast, and said that he had heard of its occurrence among the "*Kwatrino*" people near Newitte. Considering the reliability of his informants, the writer gives as his personal belief that the institution of polyandry among the daughters of chiefs occurred in Bella Coola not many years ago. Knowledge of the term of address for co-husband, already given, is strong evidence in support of this view.

DISCREDITABLE MARRIAGES

Since it has been assumed that Y is the daughter of a chief, properly married with due formality, it is necessary to digress still further from the account of her relations with X to describe connections of a less creditable nature. The most common of these was with slaves. Though frowned upon by all Bella Coola ethics, such alliances, of a permanent nature, do not appear to have been rare. In some cases it was a man who thus demeaned himself, in some a woman. Since no slave could provide the goods necessary for an elaborate wedding, the

I:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

blankets" for the child. The advantages to the donors were that they had an opportunity of showing their dignity, and it would always be a mark of pride for the child to be able to boast of the way in which she had been "held."

Ceremonial marriage clearly demonstrates two strong Bella Coola characteristics; namely, the desire publicly to enter into financial undertakings to demonstrate the wealth of the contracting party, and the desire to increase the prestige of children by means of this wealth expended indirectly on their behalf.

EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONS

Although the Bella Coola do not regard marriage primarily as a means of regulating relations between the sexes, yet the connection between the two is sufficiently close to warrant description in this chapter. A man considers intercourse as one of the normal phenomena of life: by marrying he has exclusive rights to his wife, but few moral restraints deter him from anyone else to whom he can gain access without infringing the prerogatives of some other husband. Moreover, sexual intercourse is not regarded solely as a gratification of desires; it has a significance which can be described, not inaptly, as holy. As already explained, two favourite methods of obtaining success in any undertaking are by preserving lengthy continence or by observing ceremonial chastity. If a young unmarried man or widower should wish to make use of this latter means, he is compelled to have relations with a woman to whom he has no just claims. This is universally recognized, nor is there the slightest odium attached to the man. The only essential is that he neither violate another's wife, nor force a young girl against her will.

At the present time there is great laxity in Bella Coola, a condition which makes it difficult to judge the state of affairs in former times. Every effort was made to obtain satisfactory evidence, and the following was verified and re-verified with the older men.

A wife, properly married with full ceremony, was usually

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

contact with supernatural beings, so that it is a time for grave thoughts and decorous behaviour. Even by day the members pass from house to house with dignified mien, not loitering around the sidewalks nor indulging in frivolity. Every effort is made to prevent quarrels between members who are expected to show by their appearance and actions the gravity of the rites in which they are engaged. Night after night they assemble at the house wherein the dance is taking place; those who have performed, and are therefore most closely in touch with the supernatural, even sleep there, not returning to their own houses until March. A dance usually lasts four nights, and during that time the performer's house, in which it takes place, is termed a *nuqpik*, "An Empty House." The significance of this designation is unknown.

Membership in the society depends on a duly validated ancestral prerogative to perform one of the many *kusiut* dances. At the present time every Bella Coola is a *kusiut*, even babes in arms being initiated, but formerly no one was admitted until he or she had reached an age of discretion. Some informants went so far as to say that the hair of an initiate must have begun to turn grey, and all agreed that no one was ever admitted until at least twenty, or more often, twenty-five years of age. Initiates were frequently still older; one woman, for example, stated that her mother was past the age of childbearing before admission. Since only a member of the society could be called by a *kusiut* name, the uninitiated continued to be known by the ancestral names conferred on them at infancy until they received *kusiut* designations. The importance of the society depends on the belief of the uninitiated in the supernatural powers of its members, and as there are now none to impress, the rites carried out today are little more than pictures of what took place years ago. It is the aim of the Bella Coola to carry out the dances as if uninitiated persons were in attendance, and since most of the following information was obtained from men who well remembered their sensations when not members of the society, it is justifiable to use the present

tense throughout this chapter, and to assume the presence of a number of young men and women ignorant of the significance of the rites. Formerly, the *kukusiut* often had difficulty in impressing the uninitiated with their prowess, and feuds with the *a'alk* were common.

Although membership in the *kusiut* society depends on an ancestral prerogative, it is essentially a democratic institution. A certain amount of wealth is necessary to validate a *kusiut* prerogative, but nothing comparable to that required for a potlatch; in fact, poor men are often persons of great importance within the ranks of the society. Nor are the prerogatives considered to be as valuable as ancestral rights, so that slaves are often admitted as *kukusiut* by their masters. An important *kusiut* is not esteemed by the community in the same way as the donor of many potlatches; in short, membership in the society brings limited ceremonial and semi-religious advantage, not social prestige of a public nature.

Powers and Functions of the Society

Any secret society can be viewed from the standpoints of a member, and of a non-member. The scope of the *kusiut* organization can be most clearly outlined by describing first what an uninitiated person knows about it. From his infancy, parents impress upon a child the supernatural powers of the *kukusiut* and the dangers attached to their rites. Such instruction is perhaps strongest where one, or both, is not a member. They then voice their own fears, and do not merely deceive for the good of the society. Steeped as every child is in a firm belief of the near presence of the supernatural, he readily believes what he is told. He learns, for example, that if, without special invitation, he dares enter the house where a *kusiut* dance is taking place—at any time during the four days or more that it lasts—his spirit will be drawn from him. This is sufficient to deter him from prying too closely into the rites. Strangely enough, there seem always to have been differences in teaching with respect to this deception. It is believed that if a non-

2: McIlwraith E:5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Tsimshian NE15

these accounts seemed to be exaggerations, and the casualties were probably few. The Bella Coola did not have the same admiration for the successful warrior as for the man who gave many potlatches, while everything indicates that their raids were on a small scale, rendered singularly ineffective by lack of discipline.

Specific Accounts

Active warfare has been so long discontinued on the coast that none of the living Bella Coola can describe conditions as they existed during hostilities. It was possible to collect the following accounts of raids and adventures which, though individually of small value, illustrate tactics and strategy, and recount incidents which throw light on the frame of mind of the participants.

Kitkatla War

For many years there was animosity between the Bella Coola and the Kitkatla who, with the advantage of strong government, used to sweep down from the north for salmon and slaves. Bella Coola itself was comparatively immune from attack, but the Kimsquit people suffered severely. The attackers were not always successful; one old man related how, when his mother's mother was an infant, they were driven off with the loss of four canoes and many men. The fact that this incident had been remembered for so many years indicates that it was unusual.

Slaves captured in this way were traded from tribe to tribe and rarely escaped. When an elderly Bella Coola was a lad, there was considerable excitement in the community owing to the return of *Slukwala*, a woman who had been carried off when a girl. She had been traded to a northern tribe among whom, she said, it was customary to crush captives beneath totem-poles and house-posts. Her diligence saved her from this fate, and she was passed on until she reached the far north, on the

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

APPENDIX B

STRING FIGURES

THE only form of pastime which it was practical to investigate in any detail was the construction of string figures. These seem to have no ceremonial or religious significance; they are made for recreation only, and it was found easy to learn a number while paving the way for other kinds of research. In fact, interest in them was one of the ways in which the writer became friends with a number of Bella Coola. As is to be expected, some individuals are more proficient in constructing complicated string figures than others, the old women being particularly adept. During the long delays which occur in all the dances it is a common sight to see an old crone teaching a group of young girls the figures which she herself learnt when young. Some men remember a number from childhood, but the making of designs with string is regarded as more fitting for girls and women. Songs accompany many of the figures, and the singing of these is considered an essential part of the construction. It was stated that many more figures were known long ago; in fact, several of those here recorded were only obtained after repeated efforts on the part of an old woman to reconstruct those which she had been shown when a child. No attempt was made to learn all the Bella Coola figures; a larger number could doubtless have been collected, but those here described are the ones most commonly made.

The nomenclature used is that described by Miss Haddon,[1] in itself following the method used by Rivers and Haddon. It will be assumed that the reader is familiar with this, including the meaning of the terms, "Opening A," "Position 1," and "Navaho." A string about four feet long will be found most convenient for making the Bella Coola figures.

1. A SALMON-TRAP

Double the loop; two strands now take the place of the usual one, but these will be referred to as a single string or loop. The figure can be made equally well with a string one-half the usual length.

Place string as a simple loop over left thumb and index finger and the right hand.

With right index finger hook down the string passing dorsally across left thumb and index finger and draw out to right, allowing right hand loop to slip over this hooked-down string.

[1] K. Haddon, *Cat's Cradles from Many Lands* (London, 1912).

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF FLORA AND FAUNA

824
825
128

THIS glossary does not give the scientific names of all the flora and fauna known to the Bella Coola, or even of all mentioned in this monograph, but only those of which the usual designations are ambiguous. In cases of the common mammals, no scientific terminology has been attempted, since the multiplicity of sub-species renders identification almost impossible, and the popular name is sufficient for general purposes. In regard to plants, a difficulty lies in the fact that Bella Coola nomenclature is not always strictly accurate botanically. Two or more distinct ferns, for example, may be grouped together on account of their similar use as food, and one name applied to them indiscriminately. Conversely, different terms are sometimes given to various parts of the same tree, the roots, the bark, the leaves, and so on. These factors combine to complicate the study of either ethno-botany or ethno-zoology, and necessitate the collection of a large number of specimens. The late Mr. H. I. Smith has done so, and this glossary could not have been compiled without his assistance, though the writer is responsible for any errors in it.

824
825

Alder	*Alnus rubra* Bong.
Aspen, American	*Populus tremuloides* Michx.
Bearberry, Red	*Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi* (L.) Sprang.
Bilberry, Dwarf	*Vaccinium caespitosum* Michx.
Bilberry, Tall	*Vaccinium ovalifolium* Smith.
Bilberry, Thin leaved	*Vaccinium membranaceum* Dougl.
Birch	*Betula* sp.
Blackberry	*Rubus spectabilis* Pursh.
Blackfish—*See* Killer Whale.	
Blueberry	*Vaccinium parvifolium* Smith
Bracken	*Pteris aquilina* (L.) var. *lanuginosa* Bong.
Buffaloberry, Canadian	*Shepherdia canadensis* Nutt.
Bunch-berry	*Cornus canadensis*, L.
Cedar, Red	*Thuja gigantea* Nutt.
Cedar, Yellow	*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* (Lamb.) Spach.
Clover, Perennial	*Trifolium fimbriatum* Lindl.
Cod, Black	*Anoplopoma fimbria* Pallas.
Cod, Red Rock	*Sebastodes ruberrimus* Cramer.
Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax* sp.
Cottonwood, Black	*Populus trichocarpa* T. and G.
Cow Parsnip	*Heracleum lanatum* Michx.
Crabapple	*Pyrus diversifolia* Bong.
Cranberry	*Viburnum pauciflorum* Raf.

2; McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

APPENDIX D

BELLA COOLA-ENGLISH VOCABULARY

DURING the period in the field, the writer's attention was devoted entirely to sociological and religious investigation, and no attempt was made either to analyse the intricacies of the Bella Coola language or to record texts. This part of the monograph consists only of words which were collected fortuitously, and no effort was made to compile an exhaustive list, or even a representative one. This explains the preponderence of proper names, and the large number of nouns connected with rituals of all kinds, some of which are rapidly disappearing from common usage. Many of these were used by the writer continually in gathering technical data, and their interpretation is unquestionably correct. A few words, however, were not rechecked on different occasions, or from different informants, so that some errors may have crept in, either in translation or in recording. No terms have been employed of which the writer has any real doubt, but the same accuracy is not claimed for this vocabulary as for the monograph as a whole. Lack of knowledge of Bella Coola grammar made it impracticable to utilize the words recorded in the songs, since many of them include affixes and other structural elements that affect the root.

In listing the words alphabetically, the following arbitrary system of letter order has been followed and all symbols have been disregarded, for example, *a* and *á* are not separated.

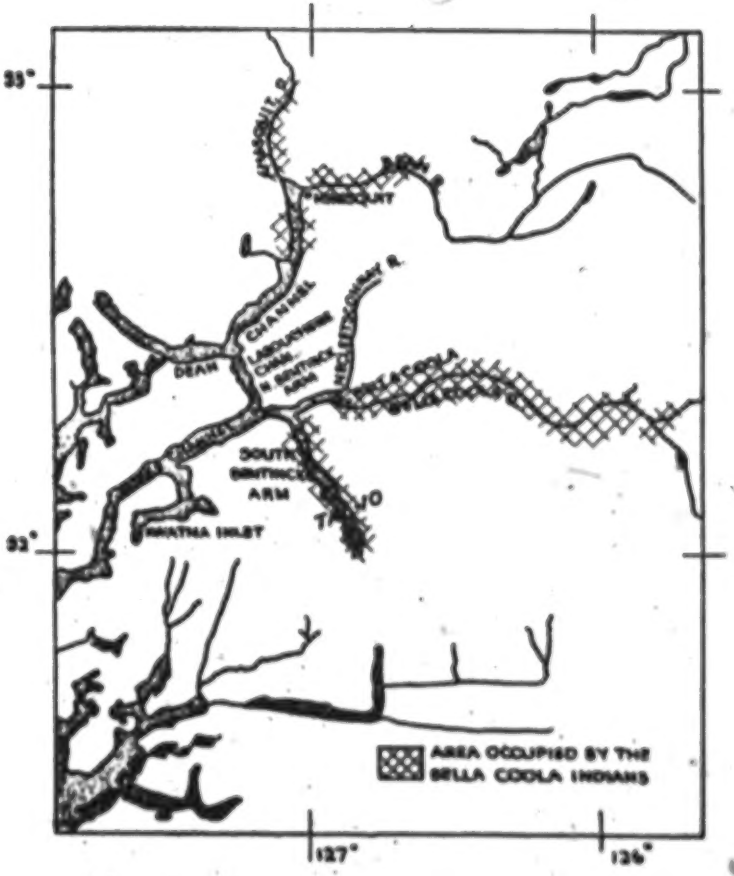
a follows a.
á follows a.
e follows e.
i follows i.
í follows i.
u follows u.

A

a'alk: 1—Loosely organized society of which the members can perform four types of dance.
2—Member of the society.
Ahnkhs: Man mentioned in an ancient story.
Ahsitkim: Chief of sea-lions in the beginning of time.
ahsnk, vocative, ahsnah: Resident.

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

102
103
131
133

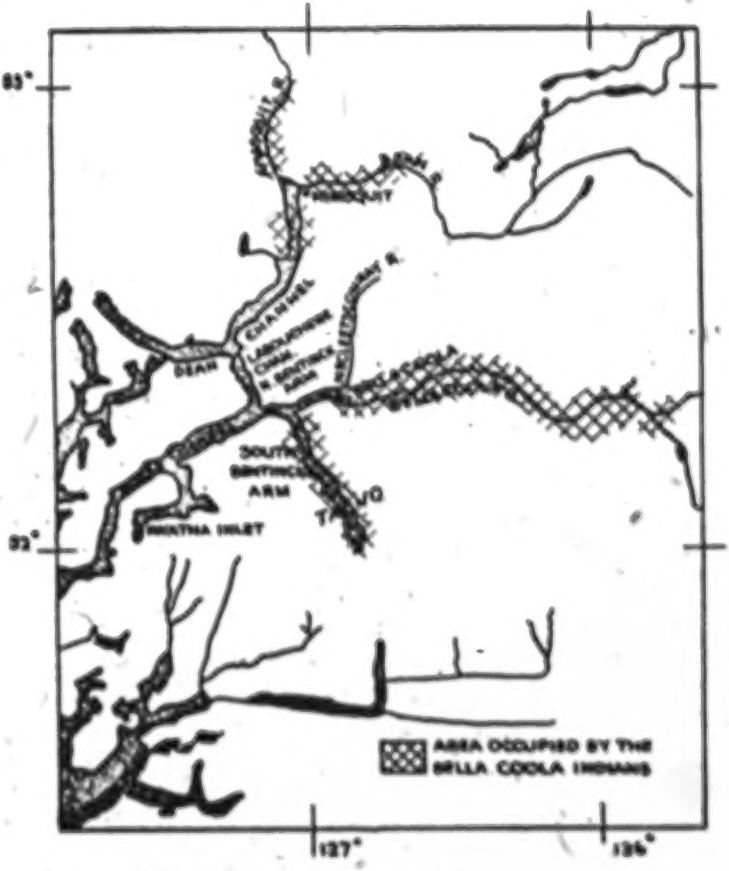


Map of the Bella Coola area

[facing p. 1]

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

101
102
131
133



Map of the Bella Coola area

[P. X]

3: Smith E-5 (1920-1923) 1925
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT AMONG THE BELLACOOLA

By HARLAN I. SMITH

MANY OF the Bellacoola Indians today believe in sympathetic magic and witchcraft, after over a hundred years of contact with white men. Most of them live within hearing of the bells of the mission church, and the government school. Not a few of the men take logging contracts; some of them build and operate motor boats; many of them join the fishing fleets of the salmon canneries; most of the women work in the canneries; and all deal at the white men's stores.

The Bellacoola lived at the heads of the long inlets half way up the Pacific Coast of Canada and in the tributary Bella Coola valley. Now, numbering perhaps two hundred and fifty, they, with the exception of a few families, are concentrated on one reservation at the mouth of the Bella Coola river. The Bella Coola valley has been called the Norway of Canada. This was where Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first white man to cross Canada overland, reached the sea.

Aboriginally, the Bellacoola were of the North Pacific Coast culture of America, which is characterized by the extensive use of red cedar and sea products, particularly salmon, the making of graceful, sea-going canoes, each hewn from a single cedar, the erection of large rectangular houses made of cedar planks, with carved house posts and totem poles, lack of pottery, and expertness in carpenter work, carving, and painting. This culture belongs to the barefoot area, but the Bellacoolas wore moccasins to a certain extent. The art of the area was that best known from the paintings and carvings of the totem poles, largely of conventionalized animal forms. The life centred around a very highly developed social organization, an extensive and powerful financial system, and property rights to names, rituals and honors. The Bellacoola language is one of the Salish linguistic stock. They

4: Smith E-5 (1920-1923) 1925
NE6, Bellacoola NE6
Carrier NE7

ENTOMOLOGY AMONG THE BELLACOOLA AND CARRIER INDIANS

By HARLAN I. SMITH

B 131

THE Bellacoola Indians live in the Norway of Canada, about midway of the Pacific Coast, where Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the first white man to cross Canada, reached the sea; that is, about half way between Vancouver and Prince Rupert. Their country is around the head of the inlets about sixty miles in from or east of Ocean Falls and the usual route of the steamers up and down the coast. This inland passage is with few exceptions protected by the outer fringe of islands. The Bellacoola language is one of the Salish linguistic stock. The people are of the typical North Pacific Coast culture, characterized by the extensive use of red cedar and sea products, especially salmon, huge houses of split cedar planks with carved house posts, and totem poles, and immense seagoing canoes dug out of cedar. They were expert carpenters and had a peculiar art, especially in painting and carving, largely of conventionalized animal forms—a valuable contribution to the art of the world. This art may become of great financial value to the manufacturers of this country as well as a magnet capable of exploitation to bring in tourists with money from foreign lands. These Indians had a very highly developed social organization, many dramas and rituals, and a complex financial system popularly known as the potlatch.

B 105

C 101 [131]

The Carrier Indians of Ulkatcho, on the other hand, live in the high plateau of the semi-arid region, perhaps 75 miles northeast of the Bellacoola. They differ from the Bellacoola in language, appearance, and culture perhaps as much as do the Turks from the English. They had a less realistic art, which was largely geometric and pictographic, highly conventionalized and symbolic. Their social organization and financial system also were less highly developed.

B C 114 104

From time to time during 1920-1923 inclusive, I have secured from both these peoples data about their use of materials. Part

5: Smith E-5 (1920-1923)1929 NE6 Bellacoola NE8
Carrier NE9
Takelma NE15
Sekani NE14

MATERIA MEDICA OF THE BELLA COOLA AND NEIGHBOURING TRIBES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Harlan I. Smith

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the materia medica of four tribes of British Columbia, the Bella Coola of Bella Coola valley, the Gitksan of Skeena river, the Carrier who live in the territory behind both of these tribes, and the Sikani of the headwaters of Peace river. Among the Bella Coola the medicines are largely family possessions known to a few individuals only, so that two families may have different remedies for the same specific complaint; but this is not the case among the other tribes. Everywhere magical practices enter largely into the treatment of disease, but are not touched upon in this report. It was impossible for the Indians to diagnose many of their maladies, so that the identifications given here are in many cases problematical.

Most of the information relating to the Bella Coola was given the writer in 1920-22, by Joshua Moody, apparently a full-blood Bella Coola Indian, born about 1868. As he did not speak English he gave the data in Chinook jargon, which has been interpreted and arranged in logical order. Joshua is an Indian scientist with great knowledge of the local plants and animals. He remembers when Mr. John Clayton was the only white man living in Bella Coola valley, and when the inhabitants saw only one other white man every year or two. Consequently he can recall the old Bella Coola material culture before it was much affected by European ideas.

Some of the information relating to the Bella Coola was given the writer in 1922-23 by the late Captain Schooner, also, apparently, a full-blood, born about 1848, who used the Chinook jargon. Alec Davis, Alexander Clekman, Louie Hall, and other Bella Coola Indians likewise gave information and corroboration.

Most of the information relating to the Southern Carrier Indians of Ulkatcho was secured during 1920-1922 from Charlie West, alias Pretty Charlie or Handsome Charlie, a native of that place, born about 1871. Charlie used the peculiar form of broken or pidgeon English commonly employed for communication between the whites and the Carrier and Chilcotin Indians of this region.

The information about the Sikani and the Northern Carriers of Hagwelget is from stray field notes kindly supplied by Mr. D. Jenness.

The information relating to the Gitksan was secured in 1923-26 from the late John Fowler and Abraham Fowler of Kitwanga, Luke Fowler and Bob Robinson of Hazelton, with additions and corroboration from a few others, all old Gitksan Indians, apparently full-blood. The information was secured mainly in English, although Abraham Fowler used also the Chinook jargon.

The method the writer employed was to submit specimens of the plants to his informants and question them concerning all their uses. Of the information thus obtained only the medicinal portion has been presented here. The plants were later identified by Mr. M. O. Malte, of the National Museum, Ottawa.

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Press map prepared by W. A. Newcombe for the Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.

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